

Irish Museums Association
Cumann Mhúsaem Na hÉireann

REPORT

COMPENSATION STUDY

An overview of compensation practices
within the museum sector across Ireland

December 2024



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
PRODUCED BY.....	4
METHODOLOGY	4
RESPONDANT PROFILES	5
Institutions.....	5
Individuals.....	5
INSTITUTIONAL HEADCOUNT AND FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) ROLES.....	7
Headcount and FTE Findings.....	7
Headcount and FTE Sectoral Estimates	8
COMPENSATION STUDY SALARY RESULTS.....	9
Museum Director, CEO, Manager	9
Curatorial and Collections Management.....	10
Head of Collections, Registrar or Equivalent Roles.....	10
Curatorial/Collections Officer or Equivalent Roles	11
Curatorial/Collections Assistant or Equivalent Roles.....	11
Conservation and Restoration	12
Head of Conservation or Equivalent Roles.....	12
Conservation Officer or Equivalent Roles	13
Conservation Assistant or Equivalent Roles	13
Learning and Engagement	14
Head of Learning and Engagement or Equivalent Roles	14
Learning and Engagement Officer or Equivalent Roles.....	15
Learning and Engagement Assistant or Equivalent Roles	15
Development, Administration, Digital or Equivalent Roles.....	16
Head of Development, Administration, Digital or Equivalent Roles	16
Development, Administration, Digital Officer, or Equivalent Roles.....	17
Development, Administration, Digital Assistant, or Equivalent Roles	17
Operations	18
Head of Operations or Equivalent Roles	18
Facilities Officers or Equivalent Roles	19
Museum Technicians or Equivalent Roles.....	19
Front of House	20
Head of Front of House, Retail, Security or Equivalent Roles.....	20
Front of House, Security or Retail Supervisor, or Equivalent Roles	21
Front-of-House, Retail Assistant, or Security Staff or Equivalent Roles	21
Tour Guides or Equivalent Roles.....	22
Perceptions of Compensation Amongst Sector Staff	22
WORKING TIME & SECTORAL BENEFITS	24
Working Time.....	24

Leave Entitlements.....	25
Sectoral Benefits	26
Training and Continuing Professional Development	27
ADDITIONAL QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS	27
APPENDIX 1: CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES.....	29
APPENDIX 2: INSTITUTIONAL SURVEY QUESTIONS	29
APPENDIX 3: STAFF SURVEY QUESTIONS.....	31
BIBLIOGRAPHY	32

Museums play a crucial role in safeguarding and providing access to Ireland's cultural heritage, while enriching communities through their diverse programmes. They are central to the creative economy, with almost 6,000 employees and volunteers annually welcoming over 8.5 million visitors through their doors. Beyond their cultural and educational functions, they contribute very significantly to tourism, urban regeneration, and the hospitality sector - making them a cornerstone of Ireland's civic and economic infrastructure.

Despite their critical role, museums face significant challenges. Economic pressures, including rising living costs and energy prices, the effects of Brexit, and the global impact of crises such as the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Palestine conflict, place increasing strain on museum resources. Inflation has increased demands for competitive wages, while operational and labour costs threaten investment in core services. Legislative changes, such as the introduction of the living wage and statutory sick pay, may further challenge museum budgets, particularly smaller institutions with limited resources.

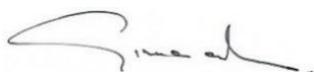
These multifaceted challenges highlight the urgent need for museums to adapt their operational and compensation strategies to secure their future. Adequate resourcing and strong stewardship are essential to maintaining their contributions and attracting and retaining skilled professionals is a growing priority - exacerbated by a competitive post-pandemic labour market.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this report and feedback received from our membership, the following six core recommendations are proposed for addressing the challenges and improving compensation practices in the Irish museum sector:

1. Address salary disparities and inconsistencies to attract and retain skilled professionals, particularly in specialised roles. Develop competitive pay scales that include cost-of-living adjustments, ensuring equitable compensation across regions, especially in high-cost locations.
2. Expand pension contributions and introduce group health insurance schemes to improve staff retention. Increase the availability of flexible working options, including remote work, to support work-life balance and modernise employment practices.
3. Provide clear career progression pathways and invest in ongoing training and professional development. Subsidise upskilling opportunities to address skills shortages and ensure a highly qualified workforce in areas like conservation and curatorship.
4. Aim to transition short-term contracts to permanent roles, where feasible, to enhance job security. Formalise unpaid programmes with stipends or benefits to better attract and retain volunteers. Promote museum careers through targeted engagement with academic institutions.
5. Integrate environmental sustainability into museum operations to reduce costs and align with public expectations. Museums that prioritise sustainable practices will not only meet societal demands, but also attract environmentally conscious staff and funding opportunities.
6. Lobby for increased government investment and support from local authorities to address financial constraints. Strengthen cross-border collaborations and seek international grants to diversify funding sources and support operational and staffing needs.

By working together to implement the above-suggested recommendations, we believe that our sector will be better equipped to navigate the economic and operational challenges that museum face while continuing to fulfil their essential cultural and social missions into the future.



Gina O'Kelly. Director, Irish Museums Association (IMA)

The Irish Museums Association (IMA) is the representative network for the museum community in Ireland.

The IMA supports and represents the interests of museums, galleries, and cultural institutions across the island of Ireland. Established in 1977, the Association provides a platform for networking, advocacy, and professional development, along with promoting best practices within museum practice, promoting collaboration, and strengthening the museum sector. It also plays a key role in raising awareness about museums' value and contributions to cultural heritage, education, and communities.

In May 2024, the IMA commissioned Cathrine Agnew to carry out this compensation study following an open call for tenders. This entailed building on an existing template and contact list to issue a sector-wide survey gathering data on current compensation and benefits; targeted discussions with museum professionals to explore perceptions, challenges, and opportunities for improvement in compensation practices; and a report detailing a comparative analysis of reported salaries and benefits.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted using three main data sources:

- A survey of institutions and their compensation practices (details in Appendix 2).
- A survey of museum staff and volunteers regarding their compensation and benefits (details in Appendix 3).
- Analysis of job advertisements posted on the IMA's website between 2021 and 2024.

Data was collected between the 30th of July to the 30th of August 2024.

The study primarily focused on quantitative data; however, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the sector's conditions, qualitative insights were also gathered. This included:

- A small number of qualitative questions in the staff survey.
- A focus group discussion with staff.
- One-to-one calls with stakeholders partnering with institutions in the sector.

To protect the confidentiality of participants, all data from institutional and individual contributors has been anonymised.

Data Handling and Exclusions

Where possible, data was used as reported or as it appeared in the raw material. However, some data was excluded based on the following criteria:

- Where duplication occurred for an institution or specific role, the most recent data was retained while older data was excluded.
- Quantitative survey questions answered narratively were included where relevant data could be extracted; otherwise, they were excluded.
- Responses that were clearly incorrect, such as surveys where all salary fields were identical, were excluded.
- Hourly or Part-Time Salaries were converted to full-time equivalents (FTE) for consistency. FTE roles are defined as those where staff work 35 or more hours per week.

Where judgment was required, the researcher opted for exclusion when in doubt.

Pay Scales and Salary:

There were three different ways in which salaries were reported for this work

- Current average salary being paid to someone in the role/the reporting individual's actual salary
- Pay scale for specific roles
- Both salary and scale together

For all the reported roles, we had more data points for the current average salary than for the highest and lowest points on the scales.

This data was used to independently calculate the median values for the current salary, the highest point, and the lowest point on the scale. Since the median represents the middle value in each distribution, it is possible for the median salary to exceed the median highest point on the scale or fall below the median lowest point on the scale in some cases.

Currency:

Salary data was reported in both Euro and Sterling (see details in Appendix 1).

RESPONDENT PROFILES

The responses to both the institutional and staff surveys reveal key details about the participating institutions and the individuals:

INSTITUTIONS

The institutional survey was circulated directly to 260 institutions, receiving 91 responses. This represents a response rate of 35%.

The respondent institutions were distributed across the Island of Ireland, with 26% based in Dublin and the remaining 74% spanning 20 counties in the Republic of Ireland and 5 counties in Northern Ireland.

Governance structures among respondents vary: 36% are limited companies, 32% are national, local, or regional museums, and 16% are charitable trusts. The remainder includes privately owned institutions, voluntary groups, committee-run entities, friendly societies, and institutions within the education sector.

In terms of operating budgets, 56% of the respondent museums reported annual budgets of under €250,000 / £210,776, while 11% indicated that they operate with a budget of over €1 million / £843,107.

INDIVIDUALS

The staff survey was distributed openly through the IMA's communication channels, receiving 194 responses. All responses were fully anonymous at the time of collection.

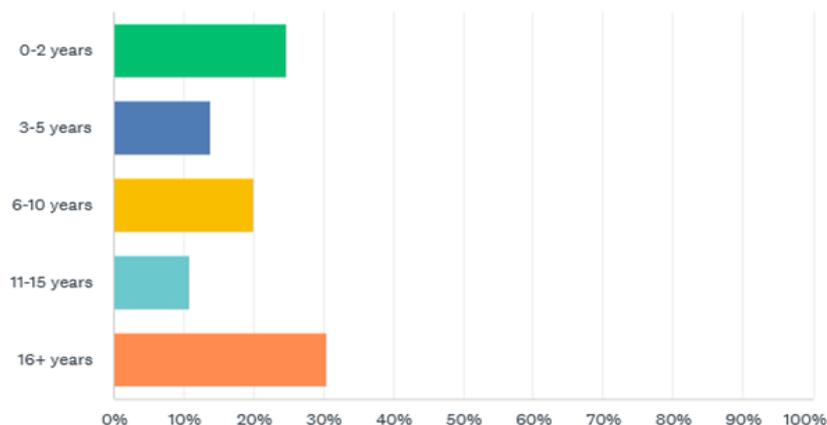
Of the respondents, 85% reported working in the Republic of Ireland, while 15% indicated they were based in Northern Ireland.

The survey asked participants to specify their job title and the number of years they had worked in the sector. The answers to these questions suggest respondents came from a diverse range of senior, mid-career, and early-career professionals. However, the response rate from volunteers was notably low.

Table 1: Length of Service

How long have you worked in the museum or wider cultural sector?

Answered: 194 Skipped: 0

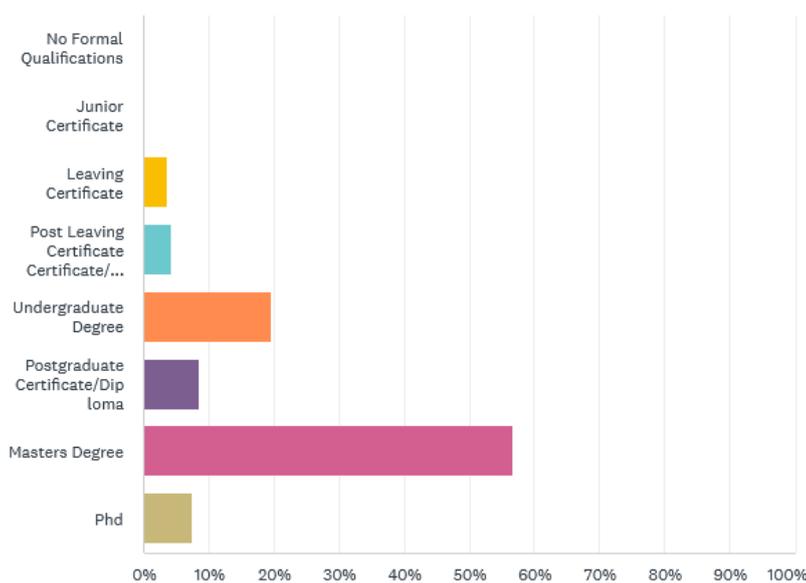


Of the respondents to the staff survey, 25% indicated they had worked less than two years in the museum or wider cultural sectors and 41% reported having worked over 11 years or more within the museum or wider cultural sectors.

Table 2: Level of Education

What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed to date?

Answered: 189 Skipped: 5



All respondents reported some level of formal education. Of these, 57% had attained a master's degree, while 20% held an undergraduate degree.

The remaining qualifications, including Leaving Certificate, Post-Leaving Certificate, postgraduate certificates/diplomas, and PhDs, each accounted for 3% to 8% of responses.

INSTITUTIONAL HEADCOUNT AND FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) ROLES

The institutional survey collected information on staff numbers within each reporting institution. It requested both headcount, defined as the total number of individuals working in the institution, and Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) roles, representing the total hours worked, expressed as the equivalent number of full-time employees (e.g., one person working 2.5 days per week equals 0.5 FTE).

The responses to these questions, detailed below, were used to estimate the total staffing figures across the sector for the entire island.

HEADCOUNT AND FTE FINDINGS

The figures outlined in Tables 3 and 4 are based solely on responses from the institutional survey, which gathered data on both headcount and FTE staff numbers within museums.

- **Headcount:** 1,400 paid staff, with an additional 105 individuals participating in trainee, fellowship, work placement, or internship programmes, and 569 volunteers.
- **FTE:** 1,254 paid roles, with an additional 75 roles in trainee, fellowship, work placement, or internship programmes, and 206 volunteers.

Table 3: Staff Headcount

How many people work within your museum (headcount)?							
Staff Type	Permanent or rolling contract staff:	Fixed-term contract staff (between 1-5 year duration):	*Seasonal or short-term project staff (under 1 year duration):	Third-party agency staff or contractors:	Trainees, fellows, work placements or interns:	Voluntary staff:	Total
Total	1,070	122	117	91	105	569	2,074
Percentage	52%	6%	6%	4%	5%	27%	100%

Table 4: Staff FTE

What is the full-time equivalent (FTE) number of people working within your museum? E.g. one person working 2.5 days a week will count as 0.5.							
Role Type	Permanent or rolling contract role:	Fixed-term contract role (between 1-5 year duration):	*Seasonal or short-term project role (under 1 year duration):	Third-party agency role or contractors:	Trainees, fellows, work placement or interns:	Voluntary role:	Total
Total	990	97	92	75	75	206	1,535
Percentage	64%	7%	6%	5%	5%	13%	100%

* It is possible that seasonal staff numbers are underreported due to challenges in quantifying their roles accurately.

HEADCOUNT AND FTE SECTORAL ESTIMATES

The reporting institutions account for 35% of the 260 museums contacted. Based on this sample, estimates for total headcount and FTE across the sector have been extrapolated to provide a fuller representation of the workforce employed in Ireland's museum sector (Tables 5 and 6).

From this, the following staff numbers have been estimated, outlined both by headcount and FTE:

- **Headcount:** 3,999 paid staff, with an additional 300 individuals participating in trainee, fellowship, work placement, or internship programmes, and 1,626 volunteers.
- **FTE:** 3,582 paid roles, with an additional 214 roles in trainee, fellowship, work placement, or internship programmes, and 589 volunteers.

Table 5: Estimated Sectoral Headcount

Estimated Sectoral Headcount							
Staff Type	Permanent or rolling contract staff:	Fixed-term contract staff (between 1-5 year duration):	*Seasonal or short-term project staff (under 1 year duration):	Third-party agency staff or contractors:	Trainees, fellows, work placements or interns:	Voluntary staff:	Total
Total	3,057	348	334	260	300	1,626	5,925
Percentage	52%	6%	6%	4%	5%	27%	100%

Table 6: Estimated Sectoral FTE Roles

Estimated Sectoral FTE Roles							
Role Type	Permanent or rolling contract role:	Fixed-term contract role (between 1-5 year duration):	*Seasonal or short-term project role (under 1 year duration):	Third-party agency role or contractors:	Trainees, fellows, work placement or interns:	Voluntary role:	Total
Total	2,829	277	262	214	214	589	4,385
Percentage	64%	7%	6%	5%	5%	13%	100%

* It is possible that seasonal staff numbers are underreported due to challenges in quantifying their roles accurately.

A larger response base, other additional data and further refinements to the calculations could enhance the accuracy of these estimates and support sector-wide planning.

COMPENSATION STUDY SALARY RESULTS

The data for these results comes from all three sources, the institutional survey, staff survey and job adverts from the IMA website. For the purposes of the survey, roles were categorised into four distinct levels:

- **Head of Institution:** This role is treated as a stand-alone category, representing the most senior position holding overall responsibility for the museum's operations and functions.
- **Senior Roles:** These individuals serve as heads of departments, holding overall responsibility for specific museum functions and typically managing their respective teams.
- **Mid-Career Roles:** This category includes department officers with significant prior experience who are responsible for managing teams, overseeing projects, and supervising junior staff.
- **Early Career Roles:** These are department assistants with little to no prior experience. They focus on delivering tasks without any supervisory or managerial responsibilities.

As outlined in the methodology, the salary data presented in this report includes responses indicating the highest point on scales, the lowest point on scales, and the actual/current average salary, with a median calculated for each set of data. Depending on the data available, the median actual salary may fall below the lowest point on the scales or exceed the highest point.

MUSEUM DIRECTOR, CEO, MANAGER

This is the most senior executive role, responsible for the smooth running of the museum. They ensure that the vision of the museum is realised and serve as the principal decision-maker on programming and collections. They hold overarching responsibility for developing and implementing business strategies, maintaining the museum's financial, legal, and institutional health, and managing relationships with major stakeholders.

Typically working in collaboration with a board of directors or trustees, they may delegate responsibilities to senior staff or a specialist team to support the museum's operations and objectives.

Table 7: Head of Museum

HEAD OF MUSEUM (DIRECTOR, CEO, ETC)		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€150,294	£126,713
Lowest Point on Scales	€32,000	£26,979
Median Highest Point on Scales	€67,304	£56,744
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€55,090	£46,446
Median Salary	€62,250	£52,483
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	15	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	2	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	2	
<i>Part Time Roles Included</i>	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	43	
Total Considered	62	

CURATORIAL AND COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

These roles are typically responsible for the management, care, and development of museum collections, including acquisitions, research, documentation, registrar duties, exhibition preparation, digitisation, and interpretation. Senior positions often involve additional responsibilities such as overseeing staff, managing resources, and coordinating services.

They may also extend to front-of-house activities, engaging with the public, responding to inquiries, and facilitating access to the collections.

HEAD OF COLLECTIONS, REGISTRAR OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

This role pertains to the individual with ultimate responsibility for the museum's collections, overseeing their curation and the management of curatorial staff.

Table 8: Head of Collections

HEAD OF COLLECTIONS, REGISTRAR OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€126,035	£106,260
Lowest Point on Scales	€29,311	£24,712
Median Highest Point on Scales	€67,304	£56,744
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€55,090	£46,446
Median Current Salary Reported	€59,228	£49,935
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>		
	5	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>		
	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>		
	2	
<i>Part Time Roles Included</i>		
	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>		
	48	
Total Considered		
	55	

CURATORIAL/COLLECTIONS OFFICER OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

These roles involve individuals working in curatorial or collections-focused positions, requiring significant prior experience.

Responsibilities may include managing teams, overseeing projects, and supervising junior staff.

Table 9: Mid-Career Curator

MID-CAREER CURATOR OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€87,553	£73,816
Lowest Point on Scales	€29,311	£24,712
Median Highest Point on Scales	€52,773	£44,493
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€37,573	£31,678
Median Current Salary Reported	€37,583	£31,686
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	1	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	0	
<i>Part Time Roles Included</i>	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	89	
Total Considered	90	

CURATORIAL/COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

These roles typically focus on foundational tasks and do not hold managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

Table 10: Curatorial/Collections Assistant

CURATORIAL/COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€51,090	£43,074
Lowest Point on Scales	€26,416	£22,271
Median Highest Point on Scales	€35,000	£29,508
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€31,948	£26,935
Median Current Salary Reported	€32,000	£26,979
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	4	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	1	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	37	
Total Considered	42	

CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

These roles are dedicated to the conservation and restoration of collections, including practical conservation work and hands-on restoration activities.

Responsibilities include organising and conducting environmental and pest control monitoring, regular cleaning and maintenance of collections, and contributing to research. Additionally, these roles may involve providing advice and training on collection care to curatorial and technical staff, along with assisting with exhibition preparations.

HEAD OF CONSERVATION OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

This role pertains to the individual with ultimate responsibility for the museum's conservation function and the management of conservation staff.

Table 11: Head of Conservation

HEAD OF CONSERVATION OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€87,553	£73,816
Lowest Point on Scales	€37,583	£31,686
Median Highest Point on Scales	€76,519	£64,513
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€55,090	£46,446
Median Current Salary Reported	€73,511	£61,977
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	1	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	8	
Total Considered	9	

CONSERVATION OFFICER OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

These roles involve individuals working in conservation officer or equivalent positions, requiring significant prior experience.

Responsibilities may include managing teams, overseeing projects, and supervising junior staff.

Table 12: Conservation Officer

CONSERVATION OFFICER OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€76,519	£64,513
Lowest Point on Scales	€34,527	£29,109
Median Highest Point on Scales	€55,232	£46,566
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€36,172	£30,496
Median Current Salary Reported	€35,053	£29,553
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	1	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	41	
Total Considered	42	

CONSERVATION ASSISTANT OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

These roles typically focus on foundational tasks and do not hold managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

Table 13: Conservation Assistant

CONSERVATION ASSISTANT OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€58,834	£49,603
Lowest Point on Scales	€29,000	£24,450
Median Highest Point on Scales	€47,436	£39,993
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€32,333	£27,260
Median Current Salary Reported	€35,862	£30,235
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	0	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	7	
Total Considered	7	

LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

These roles focus on developing and delivering the museum's education and community engagement initiatives.

Responsibilities include creating educational resources, organising on-site and off-site programs, and implementing outreach and community events designed to engage with primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions, and lifelong or informal learners. They may collaborate with external institutions to explore new learning partnerships and contribute to displays, audience engagement strategies, and other museum activities.

HEAD OF LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

This role pertains to the individual with ultimate responsibility for the museum's learning and development functions and the management of learning and development staff.

Table 14: Head of Learning and Engagement

HEAD OF LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€97,583	£82,272
Lowest Point on Scales	€33,760	£28,463
Median Highest Point on Scales	€69,000	£58,174
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€53,412	£45,032
Median Current Salary Reported	€65,000	£54,801
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	0	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	1	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	20	
Total Considered	21	

LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT OFFICER OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

These roles involve individuals working in learning and engagement-focused roles, requiring significant prior experience.

Responsibilities may include managing teams, overseeing projects, and supervising junior staff.

Table 15: Learning and Engagement Officer

LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT OFFICER OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€80,639	£67,987
Lowest Point on Scales	€28,370	£23,918
Median Highest Point on Scales	€52,000	£43,841
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€36,044	£30,388
Median Current Salary Reported	€37,697	£31,782
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	1	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	48	
Total Considered	49	

LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT ASSISTANT OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

These roles typically focus on foundational tasks and do not hold managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

Table 17: Learning and Engagement Assistant

LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT ASSISTANT OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€52,773	£44,493
Lowest Point on Scales	€26,676	£22,490
Median Highest Point on Scales	€29,680	£25,023
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€28,500	£24,028
Median Current Salary Reported	€29,850	£25,166
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	8	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	32	
Total Considered	40	

DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION, DIGITAL OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

These roles are responsible for supporting the implementation and development of the fundraising strategy; researching and assessing potential funding opportunities; recording, monitoring and reporting on existing partnerships and new fundraising opportunities.

Marketing responsibilities may include preparing and presenting targeted and accurate copy for a range of marketing materials, tailoring messages for different audiences, promoting the institution's brand, new exhibitions, and collections to a variety of targeted audiences

Digital responsibilities are a developing role in museums. They can cover a broad range of engagements with the museum's collections, including managing the museum's social media, the development of an online exhibition, creating a collection database, online access to collections, etc.

HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION, DIGITAL OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

This role pertains to the individual with ultimate responsibility for the museum's development, marketing, and digital functions. It also encompasses oversight of administration and human resources, as these roles are often combined within the sector.

The position includes managing all staff within these functions to ensure effective operations and alignment with the museum's goals.

Table 17: Head of Development

HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT, ADMIN, DIGITAL OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€126,035	£106,260
Lowest Point on Scales	€29,589	£24,946
Median Highest Point on Scales	€73,739	£62,169
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€56,556	£47,682
Median Current Salary Reported	€69,518	£58,611
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	1	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	35	
<i>Total Considered</i>	36	

DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION, DIGITAL OFFICER, OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

This question focused on individuals employed in a museum’s development, marketing, and digital functions, as well as administrative and HR roles, which are often combined within the sector.

These positions require significant prior experience and may involve managing teams, overseeing projects, and supervising junior staff.

Table 18: Development, Admin, Digital Officer

DEVELOPMENT, ADMIN, DIGITAL OFFICER OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€84,340	£71,107
Lowest Point on Scales	€28,000	£23,606
Median Highest Point on Scales	€43,400	£36,590
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€36,044	£30,388
Median Current Salary Reported	€39,991	£33,716
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>		
	4	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>		
	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>		
	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>		
	57	
Total Considered		
	61	

DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION, DIGITAL ASSISTANT, OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

These roles typically focus on foundational tasks and do not hold managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

Table 19: Development, Administration, Digital Assistant

DEVELOPMENT, ADMINISTRATION, DIGITAL ASSISTANT OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€58,834	£49,603
Lowest Point on Scales	€23,703	£19,984
Median Highest Point on Scales	€45,000	£37,939
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€29,297	£24,700
Median Current Salary Reported	€29,523	£24,891
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>		
	4	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>		
	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>		
	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>		
	46	
Total Considered		
	50	

OPERATIONS

Museum Operation staff are responsible for day to day working of the museum.

This includes maintenance and repair of buildings and operational infrastructure, the installation and breakdown of exhibitions, ensure compliance with safety standards, implementation of security protocols, and technological support for IT and other required equipment.

HEAD OF OPERATIONS OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

This role pertains to the individual with ultimate responsibility for the museum's technical functions and facilities.

This includes oversight of buildings, laboratories, specialist equipment, transport, IT systems, installation, breakdown, and storage, as well as the management of all staff within these areas.

Table 20: Head of Operations

HEAD OF OPERATIONS OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€97,583	£82,272
Lowest Point on Scales	€32,000	£26,979
Median Highest Point on Scales	€54,765	£46,172
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€47,090	£39,701
Median Current Salary Reported	€52,051	£43,884
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	0	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	44	
Total Considered	44	

FACILITIES OFFICERS OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

This question covered those employed in a museum’s technical functions. That may include buildings, IT, labs, etc. Roles at this grade would require significant prior experience and may also involve the management of teams, projects, or junior staff.

Table 21: Operations, Facilities Officer

OPERATIONS, FACILITIES OFFICER OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€71,227	£60,051
Lowest Point on Scales	€28,000	£23,606
Median Highest Point on Scales	€46,856	£39,504
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€40,000	£33,724
Median Current Salary Reported	€43,863	£36,981
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>		
	0	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>		
	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>		
	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>		
	20	
Total Considered	20	

MUSEUM TECHNICIANS OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

This question covered those employed in a technical function. This would include lab techs, building repair, exhibition installers, etc.

These roles typically focus on foundational tasks and do not hold managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

Table 22: Museum Technician

MUSEUM TECHNICIAN OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€54,955	£46,332
Lowest Point on Scales	€25,550	£21,541
Median Highest Point on Scales	€32,000	£26,979
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€28,707	£24,203
Median Current Salary Reported	€28,722	£24,215
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>		
	0	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>		
	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>		
	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>		
	17	
Total Considered	17	

FRONT OF HOUSE

Front of house staff at a museum are the public face of the museum. They may be engaged in ticketing, customer service, retail, giving tours, food and beverage services, acting as a docent, security staff and any other public facing activities as required by the specific institution.

HEAD OF FRONT OF HOUSE, RETAIL, SECURITY OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

This role pertains to the individual with ultimate responsibility for the museum's front-of-house operations.

This includes overseeing security, tour guides, ticketing, the café, events, and other public-facing activities, as well as managing all front-of-house staff.

Table 23: Head of Front of House

HEAD OF FRONT OF HOUSE, RETAIL, SECURITY OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€87,553	£73,816
Lowest Point on Scales	€38,864	£32,766
Median Highest Point on Scales	€62,430	£52,635
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€49,706	£41,907
Median Current Salary Reported	€44,853	£37,815
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	1	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	1	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	13	
Total Considered	15	

FRONT OF HOUSE, SECURITY OR RETAIL SUPERVISOR, OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

This question focused on individuals employed in a museum’s front-of-house, security, or retail functions.

These roles require significant prior experience and may include responsibilities such as managing teams, overseeing projects, or supervising junior staff.

Table 24: Supervisor Front of House

SUPERVISOR FRONT OF HOUSE, RETAIL, SECURITY OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€71,227	£60,051
Lowest Point on Scales	€27,334	£23,045
Median Highest Point on Scales	€37,255	£31,409
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€35,008	£29,515
Median Current Salary Reported	€34,380	£28,986
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	0	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	33	
Total Considered	33	

FRONT-OF-HOUSE, RETAIL ASSISTANT, OR SECURITY STAFF OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

This question covered those employed in roles that are primarily public facing, including receptionists, retail staff, docents, and security.

These roles typically focus on foundational tasks and do not hold managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

Table 25: Front of House Staff

FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF (NOT INCL. TOUR GUIDES) OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€50,399	£42,491
Lowest Point on Scales	€25,000	£21,077
Median Highest Point on Scales	€45,115	£38,036
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€29,297	£24,700
Median Current Salary Reported	€27,034	£22,792
<i>Null Value or Void Responses</i>	8	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>	47	
Total Considered	55	

*Full-time equivalents have been calculated where sufficient data was available; otherwise, data was excluded.

TOUR GUIDES OR EQUIVALENT ROLES

These roles were initially grouped with early-career front-of-house staff. However, the data indicated that separating tour guides from general front-of-house staff and reporting on them separately would provide more accurate and meaningful insights for the purposes of this survey.

Tour guides provide additional information about the museum's collections, history, and wider context where appropriate. These roles are frequently part-time and are filled by staff who are expert in their knowledge of the museum, collection, or exhibition.

These roles typically are focused primarily on giving tours and do not hold managerial or supervisory responsibilities.

Table 26: Tour Guides

TOUR GUIDES* OR EQUIVALENT ROLES		
	€ Euro	£ Sterling
Highest Point on Scales	€39,000	£32,881
Lowest Point on Scales	€24,692	£20,817
Median Highest Point on Scales	€28,410	£23,952
Median Lowest Point on Scales	€26,707	£22,516
Median Current Salary Reported	€26,936	£22,709
<i>Null Value or Void Responses**</i>		
	6	
<i>Voluntary Roles</i>		
	0	
<i>Stipend Only</i>		
	0	
<i>Total Useable Inputs</i>		
	19	
Total Considered		
	25	

*Tour guide roles are often not full-time positions.

**Full-time equivalents have been calculated where sufficient data was available; otherwise, data was excluded.

PERCEPTIONS OF COMPENSATION AMONGST SECTOR STAFF

When asked about their satisfaction levels in the staff survey, just under half of respondents (49.45%) indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their base salary.

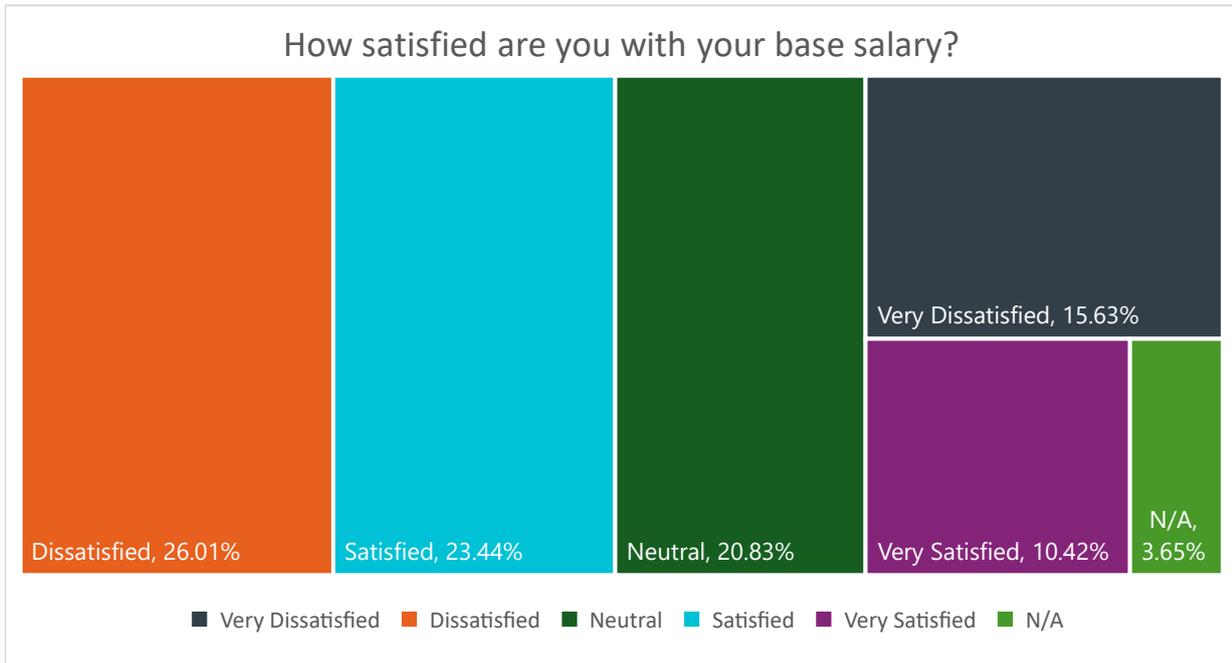
However, in the narrative responses from the staff survey, improvements to salary and benefits were highlighted 30 times, with comments focusing primarily on low pay rates and limited access to benefits, with some respondents noting inconsistencies in pay grades and disparities across departments. Examples include requests for “*matching salaries up to the same as colleagues in similar roles*” and concerns over “*pay equality issues.*”

Additionally, the cost of housing and the general cost of living were mentioned nine times, with two respondents specifically referencing the challenges of living in Dublin, e.g., “*I have a decade of experience... still barely make more than minimum wage. This is particularly hard as we are based in Dublin where the cost of living is so high.*”

Salary-related issues were often linked to concerns about job security, the prevalence of short-term contracts, and limited opportunities for career progression. Sixteen respondents identified a lack of job security and reliance on short-term contracts as significant challenges, while eleven highlighted the need for clearer pathways to career advancement and promotion.

These interconnected challenges appear to have a substantial impact on staff retention, workplace culture, and employees' sense of security within the sector.

Table 27: Base Salary Satisfaction



WORKING TIME & SECTORAL BENEFITS

Institutions were asked several questions regarding working time policies and the benefits offered to staff beyond salary. These questions also addressed which categories of staff were eligible for these benefits and subject to the working time rules.

Similarly, respondents to the staff survey were asked about their working time arrangements and their satisfaction with the benefits provided to them.

Both surveys allowed respondents to share narrative feedback, offering additional insights into their experiences and perspectives. The findings from these responses are included in this section to provide a comprehensive understanding of working time and benefits within the sector.

WORKING TIME

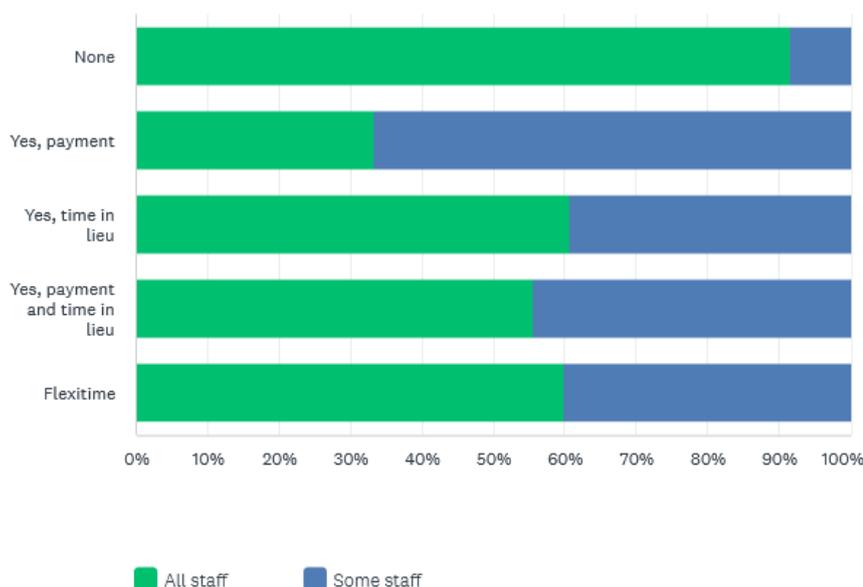
Full-time work at the surveyed institutions is defined as a working week of 35 or more hours, though the exact number of hours may vary depending on the institution.

Overall, the findings in this section indicate that a substantial proportion of staff do not receive any compensation for overtime, and where compensation is provided, it is more likely to be offered selectively rather than universally.

Table 28: Overtime

What compensation, if any, does staff receive for working overtime or outside of regular office hours?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 45



Flexitime, time in lieu, or a combination of payment and time in lieu, are less common forms of compensation. This suggests room for improvement in providing equitable and consistent benefits for overtime work.

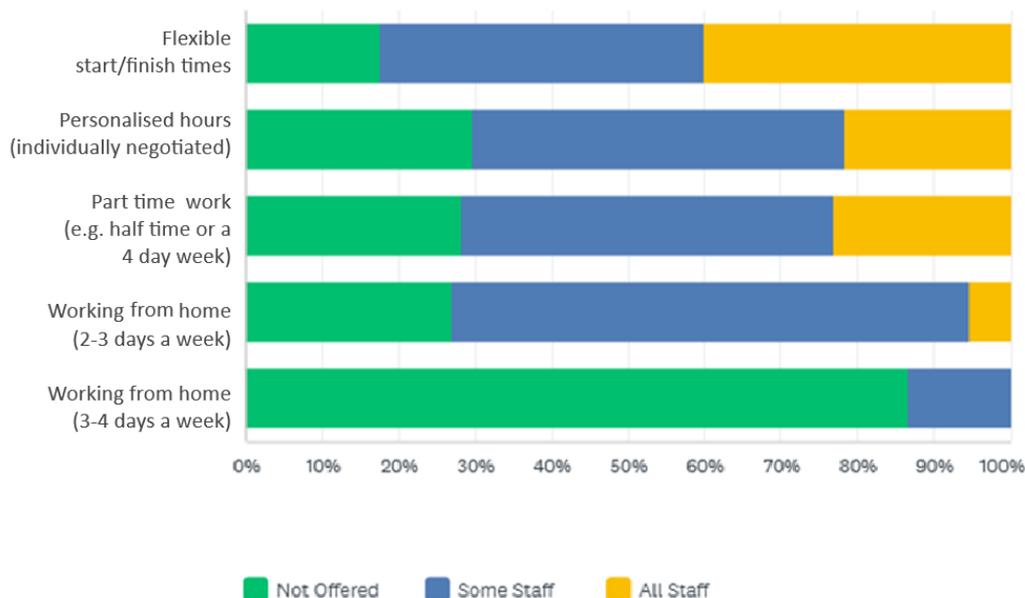
Findings suggest that while some flexibility is being incorporated, it is not yet widespread or standardised across the sector.

Respondents to the Institutional survey highlighted a preference for offering flexible working arrangements selectively to some staff rather than universally. While options like part-time work and occasional remote work (2–3 days per week) are more commonly available, personalised hours and full-time remote work (4–5 days per week) remain less accessible.

Table 29: Flexible working

To whom does the museum offer the following flexible working arrangements?

Answered: 45 Skipped: 46



In analysing data from respondents to the staff survey, flexible working and the ability to work from home was mentioned 29 times in the additional comments section. This highlighted a desire for greater flexibility, including options to work from home, flexible scheduling, part-time arrangements for part of the year, and opportunities to take longer-term leave with a return to full-time work. For example, one respondent stated, *“Better support for working parents and caregivers. More flexibility and understanding that fit with a modern way of living.”*

While respondents acknowledged that such benefits might depend on seasonality or specific roles, there was a general sentiment that remote working opportunities were not being offered in cases where they feasibly could be.

LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

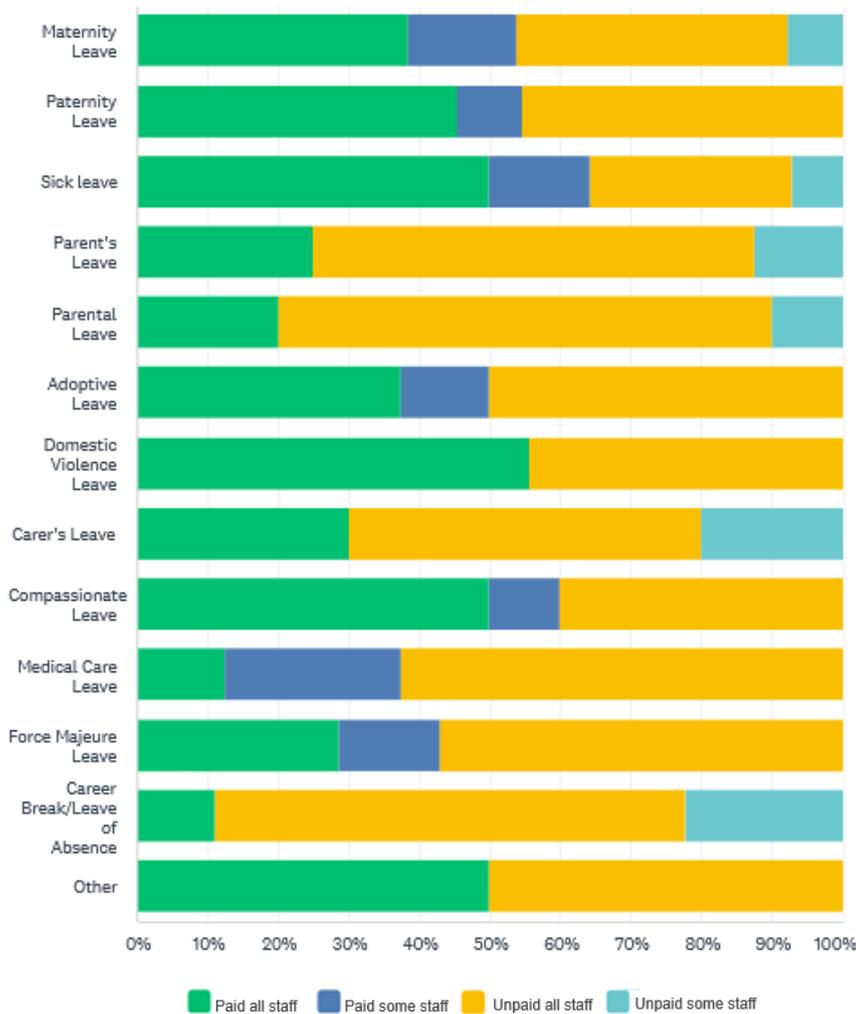
Among the institutional respondents, all staff are provided with at least the basic statutory annual leave entitlement. In 47% of institutions, this is the only leave offered across all staff.

Sixteen percent of institutions provide leave above the statutory entitlement to all staff, while 36% offer additional leave to select employees only.

Table 30 details how this leave is distributed among categories such as paid leave for all staff, paid leave for some staff, unpaid leave for all staff, and unpaid leave for some staff. Eligibility for this extra leave is typically determined by factors such as seniority, length of service, or a combination of both.

Table 30: Additional Leave

What approach does the museum or organisation take with regards the following leave entitlements?



Annual leave was not highlighted as a significant issue in the additional comments from staff survey respondents, who instead focused more on concerns related to flexible working arrangements and opportunities to work from home.

Most respondents reported being neutral, satisfied, or very satisfied with annual leave, with only 11.34% expressing dissatisfaction.

SECTORAL BENEFITS

Institutions within the sector provide a range of benefits to complement salaries, with pensions being a key offering. All institutional respondents confirmed meeting at least the statutory requirements for pensions.

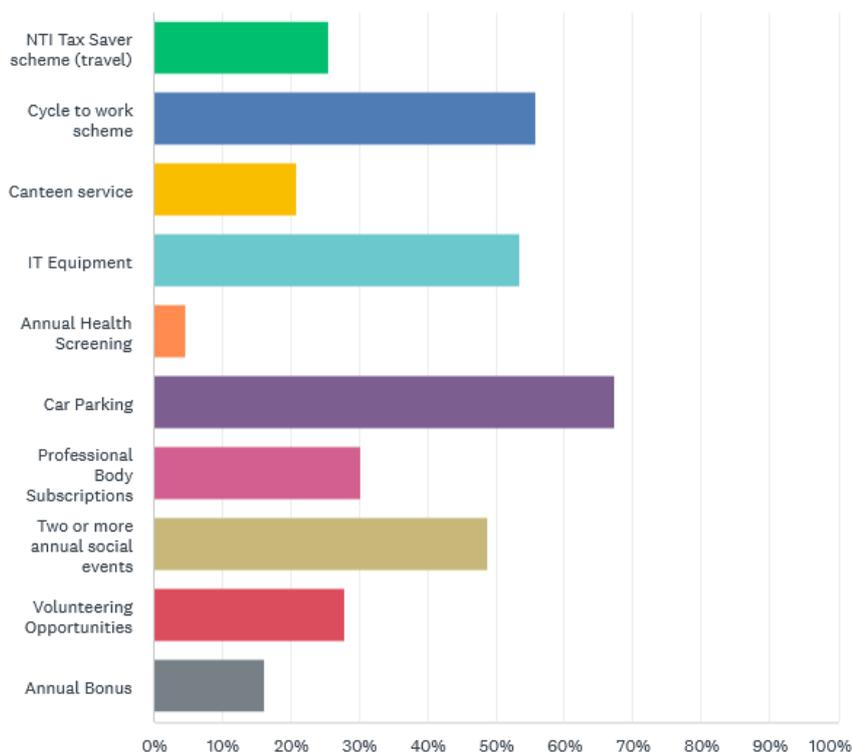
Additionally, some institutions offer a broader range of benefits to select staff, varying across institutions and roles within the sector.

In the staff survey's additional comments section, respondents highlighted the desirability of easier access to pension benefits, group health schemes, and assistance with travel costs, reflecting key areas for potential improvement.

Table 31: Sectoral Benefits

Which of the following benefits does your museum offer, free or subsidised, to either some or all staff?

Answered: 43 Skipped: 48



TRAINING AND CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Sixty-one percent of reporting institutions provide at least some contribution toward training and development for all staff, while 22% offer this support to only some staff. Seventeen percent of institutions do not provide any contribution to training and development.

Reported budgets for training and development varied widely, ranging from €500 / £420 to €35,000 / £29,500. Ongoing challenges include instances where the institution’s training budget is part of a larger organisation’s overall training budget, as well as situations where no specific budget exists, relying instead on a general policy of support, which often translates to no tangible assistance being provided.

ADDITIONAL QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS

The staff survey included questions on satisfaction levels across various workplace aspects, such as management, institutional culture, work-life balance, job security, and access to professional and career development opportunities.

Overall, satisfaction levels were positive, with approximately 50% of respondents reporting being very satisfied, satisfied, or neutral in most categories. However, career advancement stood out as a notable concern, with 45% expressing dissatisfaction or strong dissatisfaction. In other categories, dissatisfaction or strong dissatisfaction was below 30%.

Additional comments highlighted key issues such as career progression, salary, benefits, flexible working arrangements, and the cost of living, particularly housing. Other concerns raised in the narrative responses included:

- Limited access to HR/administrative support (7 comments).
- A desire for more access to training, continuing professional development (CPD), and educational opportunities (13 comments).
- A negative workplace culture (6 comments).
- The need for improved facilities, equipment, and IT infrastructure (7 comments).
- Insufficient accommodations for staff with specific needs or disabilities (3 comments).

Despite these challenges, staff reported a relatively high level of overall job satisfaction, with an average rating of 3.5 out of 5 on a Likert scale. Furthermore, 60% of respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs.

APPENDIX 1: CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES

Where salary data required conversion between sterling and euros, the following exchange rates were used: €1 = £0.843107 and £1 = €1.18609. These rates were accessed via the XE Currency Converter on September 3, 2024.

APPENDIX 2: INSTITUTIONAL SURVEY QUESTIONS

Please note that, where questions related to salary, respondents were asked to supply a salary scale where one exists, as well as the average salary for individuals in the specified role at the time of response.

Email Address
First Name
Last Name
Name of the person completing the survey:
Job title or role within the museum or institution:
Contact email address:
Name of the museum or institution on behalf of which the survey is being completed:
Is the museum or institution part of a multi-site or umbrella group?
Where is your museum located?
What is the legal/formal structure of your museum?
How many people work within your museum (headcount)?
What is the full-time equivalent (FTE) number of people working within your museum? E.g. one person working 2.5 days a week will count as 0.5.
What is the main currency with which your museum operates?
What is the museum's projected 2024 annual operating budget?
What is the museum's projected 2024 annual operating budget?
Typical Salary, Director or Museum Manager
Head of Collections, Registrar or equivalent role (Holds overall responsibility for the entire function, has responsibility for managing a team):
Curatorial/Collections Officer or equivalent role (substantial experience in section, may hold responsibility for managing others):
Curatorial/Collections Assistant or equivalent role (entry-level position, holds delivery responsibilities):
Head of Conservation or equivalent role (management responsibility for entire conservation function, has responsibility for managing a team)
Conservation Officer or equivalent role (substantial experience, may hold responsibility for managing others):
Conservation and Restoration Assistant or equivalent role (entry-level post, holds delivery responsibilities):
Head of Learning and Engagement or equivalent role (management responsibility for entire education and/or access/outreach function, holds responsibility for a team)
Learning and Engagement Officer or equivalent role (substantial experience, may hold responsibility for managing others):

Learning and Engagement Assistant or equivalent role (entry-level post, holds delivery responsibilities):
Head of Development, Digital Media, Marketing and Administration or equivalent role (management responsibility for entire fundraising and/or marketing and/or administration function, holds responsibility for a team):
Development, Digital Media, Marketing and Administration Officer or equivalent role (substantial experience, may hold responsibility for managing others):
Development, Digital Media, Marketing and Administration Assistant or equivalent role (entry-level post, holds delivery responsibilities):
Head of Operations or equivalent role (management responsibility for entire operations or technical function, holds responsibility for a team):
Facility Officer or equivalent role (substantial experience, may hold responsibility for managing others):
Museum Technicians and /or Building Management Assistant or equivalent role (entry-level post, holds delivery responsibilities):
Head of Front of House or Security, or equivalent role (management responsibility for entire function, holds responsibility for a team):
Front of House, Security or Retail Supervisor, or equivalent role (substantial experience, may hold responsibility for managing others):
Front-of-House, Retail Assistant or Security Staff (entry-level scale, holds delivery responsibilities):
Does the museum contribute to a pension scheme for staff?
Is the employer pension contribution the same for all eligible staff?
Please give further detail on the employer pension contribution levels:
Does the museum operate a group health insurance scheme?
To which of the following staff categories is this made available?
Does the museum contribute to staff training/continuing professional development?
To which of the following staff categories is this made available?
What is the museum's projected 2024 staff training and continuing professional development budget?
Which of the below benefits does your museum offer, free or subsidised, to either some or all staff?
What compensation, if any, does staff receive for working overtime or outside of regular office hours?
To whom does the museum offer the following flexible working arrangements?
Does the museum offer the same annual leave entitlement to all staff?
What approach does the museum or institution take with regards the following leave entitlements?
Where staff receive different entitlements, what are the considerations on which this is based?
Please give detail of the different annual leave entitlement levels offered by the museum:
Does the museum grant additional paid leave during periods of closure (say, during common holiday breaks such as Christmas)?
What was the museum's staff turnover rate for the period January - June 2024? (Number of staff who left your museum voluntarily/Average number of employees) × 100. <i>To calculate the average</i>

<i>number of employees, add up the number of employees at the start of January 2024 and end of June 2024, then divide the sum by two.</i>
How many staff (headcount) have been appointed to newly created roles within your museum during the period January - June 2024?
In your opinion, what are the main benefits that attracts candidates to positions within your museum?
In your opinion, what are the main challenges, if any, in attracting candidates to positions within your museum?
Are there any other comments you would like to make in relation to compensation, benefits, recruitment and retention practices - either within your museum or that you have observed within the sector - that have not been covered in this survey?

APPENDIX 3: STAFF SURVEY QUESTIONS

What is your job title?
What best describes the environment in which your museum is located?
What is your current employment status?
What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed to date?
How long have you worked in the museum or wider cultural sector?
Where is your museum located or registered as a company?
What is your current annual full-time equivalent (FTE) salary?
What is your full-time equivalent (FTE) salary scale? If your institution does not use salary scales, please enter N/A in these sections.
How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current work environment?
How satisfied are you with the following benefits you receive in your current position? If any of the below do not apply to you, please select N/A.
Are there any additional benefits or changes to your work environment that you would find attractive and which your current place of employment does not provide?
How would you rate your overall job satisfaction?
Do you have any further comments in relation to this survey?

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An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán
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